

VZCZCXRO9923
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK RUEHMOS
DE RUEHKU #0659/01 0581335
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 271335Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3197
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 3048
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEOBSA/USARCENT FWD PRIORITY
RUCJCSG/CSG CENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCADHQ/USCENTCOM FWD PRIORITY
RUEHKU/USDAO KUWAIT KU PRIORITY
RUEHKU/OMC-K KUWAIT KU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KUWAIT 000659

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, USUN FOR LAPENN, BAGHDAD FOR PILZ,
LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/2016

TAGS: [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [UN](#) [KU](#)

KUWAIT-IRAQ RELATIONS

SUBJECT: UN TEAM'S FIRST KUWAIT-IRAQ BORDER ASSESSMENT ON
DEMARCATIION MAINTENANCE

REF: A. USUN 346

[1](#)B. USUN 245

[1](#)C. KUWAIT 263

[1](#)D. KUWAIT 201

[1](#)E. 05 KUWAIT 4380

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (a) and (b)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: United Nations (UN) Iraq Desk Officer Eliza Kimball and UN cartographer Vladimir Bessarabov, part of a four person UN border team, discussed the UN team's first assessment of the Kuwait-Iraq border demarcation with pol/mil officer on February 22. The team's February 10-24 visit to Kuwait was initially postponed when MNF-I support and security failed to appear but the team decided, nonetheless, to proceed and successfully completed field assessments of nearly all land border markers, from marker 1 to 105. (Note: Marker 106 is in a highly contentious area and could not be safely assessed during this visit. End note.) Contrary to local media reports published February 23, the team avoided discussion or planning of the marine boundary as they felt it would be "too difficult" to accomplish and "would be detrimental to the Iraqi side especially if the buoy markers shifted out of place." According to Kimball, the next mission would require construction and razing of some Iraqi dwellings inside the Kuwaiti border and MNF-I support would be crucial to its success and security as she believed Iraqi police were not able to provide adequate security in the field. She requested that the Embassy work to ensure MNF-I would be available and on-site for the next mission which is planned for sometime in the fall. Both Kimball and Bessarabov expressed their thanks to the U.S. military for providing satellite imagery used to complete this mission. End summary.

Praise For Kuwaiti-Iraqi Cooperation

[1](#)2. (C) On February 22, pol/mil officer met with UN Iraq Desk Officer and border team leader Eliza Kimball as well as UN cartographer Vladimir Bessarabov to discuss their recently completed initial assessment of the Kuwait-Iraq border maintenance project. The team arrived on February 10 and conducted field assessments February 13-15, and 18-19. They had planned to begin at the southern border area but the Iraqis and Kuwaitis both requested that they start at Umm

Qasr, the point of most contention, along the northeastern border markers. Working with Iraqi and Kuwaiti police as escorts, the team finished their field assessment days earlier than expected and Kimball remarked that the Iraqi and Kuwaiti members of the entourage "were very congenial and worked well together." According to Kimball, there were five Iraqi officials (NFI) present for the assessment who were hosted by the GOK during their stay. She stated that all of the border pillars were located on the demarcation coordinates but that some of the "witnesses", or directional markers, had been moved. Bessarabov added that the border pillars were not within sight of each other, a fact which would likely have to be remedied with the placement of additional pillars.

Where was MNF-I?

13. (C) According to Kimball when the team arrived in Kuwait February 10, they were shocked to learn that the promised MNF-I support was non-existent. Kimball added that she had been told several "confusing tales" regarding the failure of MNF-I to support the mission: firstly, that MNF-I decided it was outside its mandate; secondly, that CENTCOM had to direct MNF-I to support and secure the mission and CENTCOM had failed to do so; and thirdly, that the promised support was never enunciated to MNF-I in the field and that is why they didn't appear. Pol/miloff explained that the Embassy had never received word MNF-I support was guaranteed but that in January post had sent Washington the UN representative's request to follow-up the mission support request (ref C). Kimball allowed that for the purpose of this initial assessment, the absence of MNF-I worked in their favor, especially along the northeastern border sector and in

KUWAIT 00000659 002 OF 003

getting the Kuwait and Iraqi police to talk to each other.

Fifty in the Group

14. (C) The UN team had planned for the movement of ten people including their team of four. Instead the Iraqis insisted that all five of their delegation accompany the team as well as a large contingent of officials from Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Interior (MOI) so that, in the end, the group contained 50 people. The Iraqi Ministry of the Interior (IMOI) supplied a number of Iraqi policemen to secure the border team as they traveled the old UNIKOM routes north and west of the border itself. The Kuwaiti and Iraqi police were friendly and talkative with each other, but Kimball expressed reservations about IMOI's ability to support a later mission that might be entirely within Iraq territory.

Security and Umm Qasr

15. (C) Kimball explained that the area in greatest need of work was between border marker 104 and 106 (the northeast corner) inside Iraq. "Dilapidated houses" were crowded around marker 105 and would have to be razed and their inhabitants moved, Kimball stated, adding that the job of clearing the area and constructing a path for the border access road would be "extremely sensitive" and likely "dangerous" and, in her opinion, could only be completed with MNF-I support. When pol/miloff suggested the presence of UN peacekeepers for the mission Kimball scoffed at the suggestion, saying "UN peacekeeping troops would probably run" if confronted by any sort of real threat and that they would not be up to that type of job.

The GOK and MNF-I Role

16. (C) Talking about Kuwait, Kimball suggested that the GOK

be asked to "pay for decent housing, maybe an apartment building" for the displaced inhabitants near marker 105 in order to ease tensions. Pol/miloff reminded Kimball that the GOK had already set aside funds to compensate Iraqis for shifting back into Iraqi territory but that they were waiting for the new government to be seated (ref D). Kimball asked if the Embassy could dual-track the request of MNF-I security for a future mission with the request to the GOK to finance housing and possibly a school for the affected inhabitants. She stated that "this trip worked out better" without the high profile of MNF-I but that, in her opinion, "there was no possibility of success" for a maintenance and construction mission without MNF-I's visible security on the Iraqi side of the border. (Note. The mission that the team is considering would take place sometime this autumn. End note.)

The Marine Border

17. (C) Pol/miloff raised the question of marking and extending the marine border, in light of an increasing, albeit minor, number of territorial incidents involving Kuwaiti, Iraqi, and, closer to Bubiyan Island, Iranian vessels. Both Kimball and Bessarabov admitted that they did not volunteer to discuss the marine border because they both saw it as "problematic" and something not easily solved. Bessarabov stated that "marker buoys could shift, especially in the river channel, cutting off Iraqi access to the Gulf" and he was trying to consider ways to address that particular part of the border if asked to by the GOK. (Note: The first GPS coordinate east of border marker 106 is less than a kilometer from shore. If a marker buoy was placed there and the river current shifted it westward, Iraq could lose partial access to the new harbor at Umm Qasr. End note.) In addition, Kimball said that the GOK had a special committee set up to address marine border issues and, since they had not brought up any concerns, the UN team would wait before making any suggestions.

18. (C) Finally, Kimball thanked the Embassy and the U.S.

KUWAIT 00000659 003 OF 003

military for the satellite imagery of the border which was an integral part of completing this mission. Bessarabov added his deep gratitude for the digital imagery and data which, he said, would enable them to work on a number of different possibilities to address problems and issues that might come up in the future. He stated that without the IKONOS digital data, future missions would be extremely difficult to plan and execute and asked that the thanks of the UN cartography office be passed on to the U. S. military unit responsible.

For more reporting from Embassy Kuwait, visit:
[http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/kuwait/?cable s](http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/kuwait/?cable%20s)

Visit Kuwait's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/kuwait/>

LEBARON